

## Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CAB-02 CIAE-00 COME-00

DODE-00 DOTE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 CIEP-01 FAA-00 L-03

SS-15 NSC-05 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02 /076 W

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R 011459Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4516

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY ROME

FAA BRUSSELS

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

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E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAIR, EIND, FR, US

SUBJ: CIVAIR: AIR FRANCE FLEET RENEWAL

REF: PARIS 25332

1. CONVINCED, AND PROBABLY RIGHTLY SO, THAT HE'S ON  
TO A GOOD THING, COMMUNIST PARTY SYG GEORGE MARCHAIS  
REFUELED PUBLIC CONTROVERSY OVER AIR FRANCE FLEET  
RENEWAL (AND THE MERCURE 200 DEAL) BY A STATEMENT  
TO THE PRESS AUGUST 31. REFERRING TO STATE SECRETARY  
OF TRANSPORTATION CAVAILLE'S DENIAL (REFTEL) THAT A  
"SECRET CLAUSE" IN THE MERCURE 200 DEAL COMMITTED THE  
GOF TO APPROVE PURCHASE OF DOUGLAS DC-9'S AS PART OF  
RENEWAL OF AIR FRANCE'S FLEET, MARCHAIS ACCUSED  
CAVAILLE OF PLAYING WITH WORDS AND SAID THAT HE  
(MARCHAIS) HAD NEVER USED THE WORDS "SECRET CLAUSE".

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IN HIS STATEMENT TO THE PRESS, MARCHAIS SAID HE

COULD UNDERSTAND HOW HIS QUESTION (TO THE PRIME MINISTER) "COULD EMBARRASS THOSE WHO ARE IN THE HABIT OF BOWING TO AMERICAN DEMANDS, BUT I CAN'T BE CONTENT WITH A DENIAL THAT REALLY ISN'T A DENIAL." MARCHAIS SAID THAT WHAT HE WANTED FROM GOF WAS A CLEAR AND UNEQUIVOCAL COMMITMENT THAT AIR FRANCE WOULD NOT BE PERMITTED TO BUY THE DC-9 WHICH, MOREOVER, HE ADDED, IS NOW A "TECHNICALLY OUTMODED" AIRCRAFT. PURCHASE OF DC-9'S WOULD THUS BE "SCANDALOUS" AND A GRAVE BLOW TO AIR FRANCE'S BEST INTERESTS. MARCHAIS SAID THAT THE PRECISE QUESTION HE WAS PUTTING TO THE GOF WAS THE FOLLOWING: "IS IT TRUE THAT A 'COUNTERPART' OF THE DOUGLAS-DASSAULT-SNIAS AGREEMENT WOULD BE A COMMITMENT BY THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT TO HAVE THE NATIONAL COMPANY AIR FRANCE BUY DOUGLAS DC-9'S TO REPLACE ITS CARAVELLES?"

2. WE MIGHT NOTE THAT THE PRESS MADE PROMINENT USE OF THE PHRASE "SECRET CLAUSE" IN FIRST REPORTING THE MARCHAIS INITIATIVE, AND IT MAY WELL BE AS MARCHAIS SAYS THAT THE PHRASE WAS NOT HIS. WE DO NOT YET HAVE THE TEXT OF HIS QUESTION IN THE EXACT FORM SUBMITTED TO THE PRIME MINISTER, THOUGH IT SHOULD BE PUBLISHED SHORTLY IN THE JOURNAL OFFICIEL.

3. COMMENT: FOR REASONS INDICATED IN REFTEL COMMENT, MARCHAIS COULD BE VERY ADROITLY PAINTING THE GOF INTO A TIGHT CORNER. "COUNTERPART" IS A WORD PERMITTING FAIRLY BROAD INTERPRETATION. IF PURCHASE OF SOME DC-9'S WERE EVENTUALLY TO BE AUTHORIZED FOR AIR FRANCE (AND PERHAPS FOR AIR INTER AS WELL?), MARCHAIS WOULD BE IN A STRONG POSITION TO CRY "DEAL" AND TO CLAIM THAT THE GOF HAD DELIBERATELY SOUGHT TO MISLEAD THE PUBLIC. HIS QUESTION MAY ALSO BE A FURTHER GAMBIT IN THE EFFORT BY THE COMMUNISTS TO BUILD UP PRESSURES FORCING A DEBATE IN PARLIAMENT EARLY THIS FALL ON GOF POLICY FOR THE AEROSPACE INDUSTRY. FINALLY, IT IS OF COURSE THE COMMUNISTS' INTERESTS THAT MARCHAIS HAS AT HEART AND NOT THOSE OF AIR FRANCE, WHICH ASKS NOTHING MORE THAN TO BE LEFT FREE TO PURCHASE REPLACEMENT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AIRCRAFT OF ITS OWN CHOOSING. IT COULD BE, THEREFORE, THAT THE FUSS MARCHAIS IS STIRRING UP MIGHT NOT BE ENTIRELY UNWELCOME TO THOSE WITHIN THE AIR FRANCE ORGANIZATION WHO MIGHT STILL BE HOPING TO REPLACE THE CARAVELLES WITH BOEING EQUIPMENT, E. G., 737'S OR EVEN SOME 727'S.  
RUSH

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## Message Attributes

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**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
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